

## **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

Whereas, oppression and persecution of religious minorities around the world has emerged as one of the most compelling human rights issues of the day. In particular, the worldwide persecution and martyrdom of Christians persists at alarming levels. This is an affront to the international moral community and to all people of conscience;

Whereas, in many places throughout the world, Christians are restricted in or forbidden from practicing their faith, victimized by a “religious apartheid” that subjects them to inhumane, humiliating treatment, and in certain cases are imprisoned, tortured, enslaved, or killed;

Whereas, severe persecution of Christians is also occurring in such countries as Sudan, Cuba, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan, North Korea, Egypt, Laos, Vietnam, and certain countries in the former Soviet Union, to name merely a few;

Whereas, religious liberty is a universal right explicitly recognized in numerous international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas, Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that “practice discrimination against Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, going even so far

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as to refuse them the right to meet in private for prayer”, declaring that “this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation not only of all the norms of current international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one’s faith openly”, stating that this is for human beings “their reason for living”;

Whereas, the National Association of Evangelicals in January 1996 issued a “Statement of Conscience and Call to Action”, subsequently commended or endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. They pledged to end their “silence in the face of the suffering of all those persecuted for their religious faith” and “to do what is in our power to the end that the Government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths”;

Whereas, the World Evangelical Fellowship has declared September 29, 1996, and each annual last Sunday in September, as an international day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians. That day will be observed by numerous churches and human rights groups around the world;

Whereas, the United States of America since its founding has been a harbor of refuge and freedom to worship for believers from John Winthrop to Roger Williams to William Penn, and a haven for the oppressed. To this day, the United States continues to guarantee freedom of worship in this country for people of all faiths;

Whereas, as a part of its commitment to human rights around the world, in the past the United States has used

its international leadership to vigorously take up the case of other persecuted religious minorities. Unfortunately, the United States has in many instances failed to raise forcefully the issue of anti-Christian persecution at international conventions and in bilateral relations with offending countries: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*  
2       *concurring), That—*

3               (1) unequivocally condemns the egregious  
4       human rights abuses and denials of religious liberty  
5       to Christians around the world, and calls upon the  
6       responsible regimes to cease such abuses; and

7               (2) strongly recommends that the President ex-  
8       pand and invigorate the United States international  
9       advocacy on behalf of persecuted Christians, and ini-  
10      tiate a thorough examination of all United States  
11      policies that affect persecuted Christians; and

12              (3) encourages the President to proceed for-  
13      ward as expeditiously as possible in appointing a  
14      White House Special Advisor on religious persecu-  
15      tion; and

1           (4) recognizes and applauds a day of prayer on  
2       Sunday, September 29, 1996, recognizing the plight  
3       of persecuted Christians worldwide.

Passed the Senate September 17, 1996.

Attest:

*Secretary.*

104<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

## **S. CON. RES. 71**

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### **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

Expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to  
the persecution of Christians worldwide.